

Strategic Marketing and Outreach: Tips, Tricks and Tools for Promoting Your Statewide Websites

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Outline:

- 1) What is a Marketing Plan?
- 2) Why is A Marketing Plan Important?
- 3) The Seven Phases of a Strategic Marketing Plan

What is a Marketing Plan?

- A marketing plan is a written roadmap of your marketing goals.
- Marketing plans generally include:
 - a brief introduction
 - your budget
 - a list of concrete goals and objectives
 - a brief analysis of your target market
 - a description of your methods or tactics
 - a timeline
 - a description of how your success will be measured.
- A marketing plan should remain a “living” document. Once you get the basics down, continue to revisit it and add new ideas and goals.

Why is a Marketing Plan Important?

A written, well thought-out marketing plan is important for many reasons:

- It keeps the big picture in front of you, so that you don't lose sight of it in your day-to-day activities.
- It allows for knowledge transfer from one year to the next, and one coordinator to the next.
- It allows you to think about your marketing objectives as an interrelated whole, rather than as discrete projects.
- Having a marketing plan will increase confidence that your outreach efforts have both direction and measurable results.
- Creating a marketing plan and keeping track of your successes will go a long way towards providing you with concrete talking points when you have discussions with potential partners and funders.

The 7 Phases of A Successful Strategic Marketing Plan

Phase 1: Brainstorm

- Before creating a structured marketing plan, take some time to brainstorm about potential marketing projects and objectives.
- Talk to members of your statewide justice community, and especially those who are already engaged in outreach and development.

Phase 2: Set Goals

In order to set goals, think about what it is that you are trying to achieve. Some examples might include:

- To raise awareness of your sites with the legal services community, community service organizations, government agencies and court personnel.
- To provide information in an clear format that clients (or funders) will understand.
- To provide non-English speakers or residents of a particular neighborhood or region with legal information and access to legal services.

Your goals should be realistic and (ideally) measurable. It is important that every element in your marketing plan is tied to a specific goal.

Phase 3: Understand Your Audience

- Understanding your various audiences is an extremely important step in developing an effective marketing plan.
- You will likely have a number of audiences or target market segments, and each of them requires careful thought about how best to reach them.
- Examples of your target market segments might include clients, members of your statewide justice community, courts, social services organizations and libraries.
- These target market segments can be further dissected. For example, clients can be divided into income levels, language proficiencies, disabilities and levels of literacy.
- Understanding the size and share of clients falling into these categories will allow you to target your marketing so that your message translates well in each segment.

Phase 3: Understand Your Audience (cont.)

A few concepts that marketers use to segment their audience are:

- Demographics: Demographics are statistical characteristics of human populations (i.e. age or gender).
- Sub-Demographics: Sub-demographics are more narrow categories within a demographic (i.e. education, income, or location).
- Psychographics: Psychographics count psychological information (opinions, religious beliefs, tastes, personality traits, etc.).
- Technographics: Technographics are measurements related to computer and internet usage.

Phase 3: Understand Your Audience (cont.)

Using your site's reporting tools, you can determine which zip code users are accessing the site from or what county they are looking for legal information in.

Using this information, you can go to one of these websites and look up information (demographics, psychographics, technographics, etc.) on various segments of the population:

- My Best Segments: <http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments>
- The US Census Bureau's American Fact Finder: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Phase 4: Decide on a Marketing Message

The next step in developing a marketing plan is to create a marketing message that is targeted at to the segment(s) you wish to reach.

For example, a marketing message to a low income client segment might be:

"Can't afford a lawyer? You're not alone. Over two million X residents live in poverty, unable to afford even the most basic necessities. Now there is a free alternative. Visit www.lawhelp.org."

Your message should be both **accessible** and **persuasive** to the population segment that you intend to reach. It should also **clearly state the course of action** that you want viewers to take.

For consumer goods, it's "buy it." For websites, it's "visit."

Phase 5: Determine your Methods or Tactics

Once you have a message that is targeted at the specific segment of the population you want to reach, the next step is to deliver it **in as many ways as you think will be successful**.

Remember that just as the message must be targeted, the **method of delivery must also be targeted** to the segment of the population that you are trying to attract.

The most common tactics for marketing a website fall into these three categories:

- 1) Online Strategies
- 2) Offline Strategies
- 3) Alternative Strategies (Grassroots/Guerilla)

Phase 5: Determine your Methods or Tactics (cont.)

Examples of **online** tactics include:

- Getting other websites to link to your site, including the websites of legal services organizations, social services agencies, bar associations, courts, libraries, schools, government, churches and local United Ways. (Free)
- Post announcements on relevant listservs -- law and public librarians, court clerks, CTCNet, Digital Divide, etc. (Free)
- E-mail alerts and newsletters, including your own and others -- offer to reciprocate links with other social services organizations, etc. that send out e-mail to their clients. (Free)
- Put the link to your sites in the signature of all of the staff in legal service organizations in your state. (Free)
- Submit your site URL to search engines (Free)
- Buy ad space or keywords on search engines or other relevant website (\$)

Phase 5: Determine your Methods or Tactics (cont.)

Some **offline** marketing ideas include:

- Press/News releases -- make your own news and invite reporters to do a feature on the site or client success stories. (\$)
- Flyers/Brochures -- translate them into different languages, put them in courts and other points of contact between your audience and legal and social services organizations that serve them. (\$)
- Stickers, Mouse Pads, Pens and Bookmarks -- put pens in the hands of court clerks, mouse pads on the desks of social service agencies, and bookmarks at the checkout desks of libraries. (\$)
- Public Service Announcements (\$)

Phase 5: Determine your Methods or Tactics (cont.)

- Booths/Event promotion – “table” at community events and other gatherings that your target audience is likely to attend. (Free, \$)
- Newsletters (\$)
- Word of mouth -- educate advocates, social services staff and court personnel so that they can meaningfully talk about your website. (Free)
- Ads -- foreign language newspapers, bulletin boards, etc. (\$)
- Add your URL as part of your organizations voicemail message. (Free)
- And **always** think about how to leverage new resources, special events and specific times of the year (i.e. tax season) into opportunities to employ these tactics to market your website!

Phase 5: Determine your Methods or Tactics (cont.)

Alternative Strategies:

While online and offline marketing strategies should comprise the bulk of your tactics, don't forget to consider unconventional grassroots or guerilla tactics.

For example, write a song to have sung about your site by a group at a local community gathering or have a local business that caters to the segment that you are targeting name an item that they sell after your site for a period of time (i.e. the Law Help burger).

Phase 6: Create a Timeline

- Just as with any project, a marketing plan should have a timeline built into it in order to keep things in track.
- Staggering the delivery of your messages using different delivery methods at set increments helps to reinforce your message.
- Often your marketing efforts will have more impact when your target audience has been primed to receive your message (think TV commercials).
- Also, your audience may be more or less likely to receive your message during certain times of the week, month or year.

Phase 7: Measurements

Measure, measure, measure! Always think about ways to measure your marketing efforts. For example, by using surveys, usage reports and user feed back.